



Mayor's Night Out – Riverside, California
MNO University
May 30, 2007
Hyatt Elementary School

Code Enforcement:

Q - What are City's practices regarding disking versus mowing?

A - The Code Enforcement Division surveys the entire City of Riverside twice a year or more for growth and regrowth of weeds. When weeds are identified, landholders are noticed and given opportunity to abate the weeds themselves. If an owner is unresponsive, the Code Enforcement Investigator will order a contractor to abate the weeds and the fees are lien against the property. The City currently abates weeds by mowing, disking or by handwork. Last year, the City worked with the South Coast Air Quality Management District to explore the advantages of mowing versus disking. Results are still pending from this study. Code Enforcement will be exploring more regular practices of mowing properties this next season. Plans are already in the works to mow the surrounding areas of UCR.

Fire

Q - Can we influence wilderness fire suppression?

A – It is imperative that homeowners in neighborhoods adjacent to wilderness areas keep their properties cleared. The Fire Department has reviewed much of the land behind many of the homes in the University Neighborhood. Though it is most likely county or state property, the brush is currently at a very low level. The City Fire Department is working cooperatively with the County and State Fire Departments.

Legal

Q - Is there anything the City can do to work with Insurance companies that are no longer insuring houses in areas close to the foothills?

A - Unfortunately, there is nothing that the City can do directly to affect an insurance company's policy decision not to insure certain residential properties. Indirectly, the Code Compliance could work with the homeowner to ensure that the homeowner has complied with all brush clearance regulations if such compliance is necessary to obtain coverage.

Library

Q - What is the wisdom behind the "communication muzzle" on library and code services?

A - In public libraries throughout the country it is routine that there be a policy in place to ensure that the Library speaks with one voice to ensure informed

responses and consistent and credible information dissemination. Upon learning that the Riverside Public Library did not have such a policy in place the Library Director drafted the policy language and implemented the policy. All library policies are approved by the Board of Library Trustees and reviewed regularly.

Parks

Q - I would like to build a park at Islander Pool. It would be great for all the kids and the parents can enjoy themselves. (Victoria is 8 years old)

A –Developing a playground area and expanding some of the facilities at Islander Pool are definitely worth exploring. Though not currently funded, the Parks Department can consider this expansion in the next budget cycle.

Q - Why has the City planted invasive weeds at the Sycamore Canyon Park entrance and Fire Station #14?

A – City staff contacted the landscape architects who reviewed the plan which consists of perennial grass which grows in 3' high with a spread of 18" and has rough stems and a long, narrow leaf blade. The plant's location on the site should serve as an attractive tall ground covering without endangering other plant life in the vicinity.

Q – Why was a White Plastic Fence put up along Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park? It seems like one of the most important values the neighborhood holds is keeping our wilderness area wild.

A – The decision to place the fence at the entrance of Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park was to assist with the identity of the park entrance.

Planning:

Q - What has happened to the University Neighborhood Plan and are we part of it?

A - The City cannot officially adopt the Neighborhood Plan until after the General Plan has been adopted. Nevertheless, there are action items that the City has already started completed. Some of these include the following:

1. Implementation of the Neighborhood Livability Program;
2. Place of a designated Code Enforcement Officer in the Neighborhood;
3. Implementation of a Parking Permit Program for the neighbors in the Watkins/Valencia Hill/Blaine area. Discussions are underway to promote the Parking Permit Program throughout the neighborhood; and
4. Establishment, in the recently adopted Bicycle Master Plan, of the Gage Canal as a bicycle friendly trail.

As additional action items, requiring neighborhood input, are taken up for completion the neighborhood will be notified of meetings to discuss the items.

Q - As the City annexes land near Box Springs Mountain, what are the City's plans for enlarging the Box Springs Mountain Park?

A - The City has begun the process of annexing property within the Box Springs Mountain Reserve, with plans to retain it as part of the reserve. The reserve will remain under the management of the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District upon annexation with the remainder of the properties privately owned. The Parks Department will work with the County.

Q - There was a convenience store at the corner of Big Springs & Watkins, when did it become a liquor store and did planning approve that? Recently the sign was changed to read University Liquor.

A - A conditional use permit (CU-019-967) was approved by the Planning Commission in 1996 to allow the convenience store with incidental off-sale of alcoholic beverages including beer, wine and hard liquor. The CUP limits the sales of alcohol such that the quarterly gross sales of alcoholic beverages shall not exceed 30 percent of the quarterly gross sales of all products sold by the store. This issue has been forwarded to Code Enforcement to follow up and determine if there is a violation of the conditions.

Q - How could a large shopping center not impact our neighborhood? Traffic on Watkins is out of control.

A - City staff knows of no plans for a large shopping center in the University Neighborhood. If one is proposed, it will be thoroughly evaluated and input from the University Neighborhood will be solicited.

Public Utilities

Q - Could the University Neighborhood become a prototype for Solar Energy or a Model Solar City?

A - University Neighborhood could be a Model Solar Community. Currently, Riverside Public Utilities has residential rebates at \$3 per watt up to 50% of the project cost not to exceed \$25,000 per project. Residents would select and have a PV system installed at their home and then apply to RPU for a rebate on qualifying systems.

Q - Has there been a feasibility study about using the \$10 million AQMD requires of the City to mitigate the new peaker plants which are being built for something such as making University neighborhood a model solar neighborhood?

A - I think this issue is still under discussion at AQMD. I would refer this to Dave and or the Mayor for an answer.

Q - What progress is being made to allow "grey water" irrigation systems to be installed in residential structures and City facilities to conserve water resources?

A - Currently the City of Riverside does allow the installation of gray water systems per the Uniform Plumbing Code, Appendix G-A.

Public Works:

Q - Could the Public Works Department refrain from starting street work at the beginning of the school year and summer session?

A - We work with the school districts at the beginning and throughout the school year to ensure that the best project schedule is being followed. If you have specific concerns about a particular project you may contact Sean Gill at 826-5892

Q - How about landscaping along or adjacent to Watkins near the train tracks and 215 Freeway?

A – During the next year, the area on Watkins near the train tracks and the 215 Freeway will continue to be affected by the freeway construction. There is currently a discussion between the City and Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) which owns the tracks and has a federal grant to landscape the right-of-way as to a plan for the area.

Q - What is the status of paving Genert Street? There are dust concerns for Hyatt Elementary School?

A – Though Genert Street is located outside of the City limits, City staff will make a call to the County Transportation Department asking that they continue to condition the road to suppress the dust.

Police:

Q - Illegal aerial fireworks are a problem all over the University Neighborhood around July 4. Can the City provide more enforcement especially in and around the Sports Complex and other parks for the 4th of July and weekends before and after?

A - The Riverside Fire Department Arson Task Force conducts special enforcement of fireworks violations every year around the 4th of July. They usually conduct their enforcement several days before, on, and after the holiday. A Riverside Police detective is assigned to this task force. Members of the UNET team will be working the fireworks show at the Riverside Sports Complex again this year. Also, RPD dispatch advises and sends patrol officers to many calls for service regarding the illegal use of fireworks throughout the night.

Q - What is being done about vehicles with modified exhaust systems making noise (against vehicle code) and air pollution?

A - Modifications to vehicle mufflers are covered in California Vehicle Code (CVC) section 27150, which explains that *“every motor vehicle subject to registration shall at all times be equipped with an adequate muffler in constant operation and properly maintained to prevent any excessive or unusual noise, and no muffler or exhaust system shall be equipped with a cutout, bypass, or similar device.”* Another CVC section that officers use to enforce modifications made to vehicles is 27156 CVC. Vehicles cited under this section must be inspected and certified by the State Smog Referee. These sections are tools for officers to help combat illegal street racing, which usually involves vehicles with modifications that violate these CVC sections. All current UNET officers have been trained by the Riverside Police Department’s “Drag-Net” team, and routinely conducts traffic enforcement on vehicles with modified exhaust systems making loud noise. The Riverside Police Department conducts safety checkpoints routinely throughout the year, with the last one netting 101 towed vehicles. The UNET team also conducts safety checkpoints periodically within the University Neighborhood.

Mayor’s Office:

Q - Why can’t the 6:30 p.m. meeting start at 6:30 p.m.?

A - The Press-Enterprise reported the start time for Mayor’s Night Out as 6:30 p.m. However, in a press release sent to the Press-Enterprise it was stated as “Come for conversation with City staff from 6:30 -& 7:00 p.m. to discuss projects and programs in your neighborhood. The Mayor and other City leaders will be available for questions at 7:00 p.m.”